

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 HA-05 /116 W
-----003594 171904Z /50

P 171831Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1809
INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USICA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 10918

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
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TAGS: PINS, MOPS, FR, CG, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET MEDIA ON SHABA EVENTS

REF: MOSCOW 10796

1. CONTINUING ITS LOW KEY MEDIA COVERAGE FOR SECOND
DAY, SOVIET MAY 17 CENTRAL PRESS CARRIES THREE SHORT

TASS REPORTS FROM PARIS AND BRUSSELS. MAJOR POINTS OF ARTICLES ARE:

-- PARTICULARLY SHARP MILITARY ACTION IS TAKING PLACE IN REGION OF TOWNS OF KOLWEZI AND MUTSHATSA BETWEEN UNITS OF FNLC AND GOVERNMENT TROOPS. BELGIAN NEWS AGENCY REPORTS THAT KOLWEZI IS IN HANDS OF FNLC. FNLC REPRESENTATIVE SAYS THAT FOREIGN SOLDIERS AND MERCENARIES ARE FIGHTING ON SIDE OF ZAIRIAN TROOPS.

-- NATIONAL MOVEMENT OF CONGO (CHARACTERIZED BY TASS AS "A ZAIRIAN ORGANIZATION") HAS SENT CABLES TO U.S., SOME OTHER NATO COUNTRIES, AND CHINA CAUTIONING THEM AGAINST INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL EVENTS IN SHABA.

-- "FIGARO" STATES THAT, IN CONNECTION WITH SHABA EVENTS, AN ORDER HAS BEEN RECEIVED AT THE FRENCH MILITARY AIR BASE AT ORLEANS TO PUT MILITARY TRANSPORT PLANES ON FOUR HOUR ALERT. PLANES FROM THIS BASE TOOK PART LAST SPRING IN TRANSFER OF MOROCCAN TROOPS AND MATERIAL TO ZAIRE, SAYS TASS.

2. COMMENT: MAY 17 MEDIA COMMENT IS EVEN MORE RESTRAINED THAN THAT OF MAY 16 (REFTEL). REFERENCE TO FRENCH STANDBY READINESS TO PARTICIPATE IN AIR LIFT IS INTERESTING SINCE SOVIET MEDIA WAS EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO MAKE SUCH SPECIFIC CRITICISM OF FRENCH INVOLVEMENT DURING SHABA INVASION LAST YEAR.

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3. IN BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF MAY 17, DEPUTY HEAD OF PRC EMBASSY POLITICAL SECTION EXPRESSED VIRTUAL CERTAINTY THAT HIS COUNTRY WOULD NOT SUPPORT GOZ WITH EVEN TOKEN MATERIAL ASSISTANCE. WHEN ASKED ABOUT "MORAL SUPPORT," HE CONCEDED THAT THIS WAS LIKELY SINCE THE "SOVIETS AND CUBANS ARE SURELY INVOLVED" AND THAT THIS WAS A DANGER TO AFRICA. CONTINUING ON THE SAME POINT HE SAID THAT HE HAD "HEARD" THAT SOME SOVIETS AND CUBAN FORCES HAD LEFT ETHIOPIA RECENTLY AND GONE TO ANGOLA. HE CONNECTED THE "RETURN" OF THESE TROOPS TO ANGOLA TO THE OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING IN SHABA. MATLOCK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, INVASIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW10918
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780208-0522
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780550/aaaabpuj.tel
Line Count: 105
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3ffdb39b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MOSCOW 10796
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2667133
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET MEDIA ON SHABA EVENTS
TAGS: PINS, MOPS, FR, CG, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3ffdb39b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014